

For immediate release
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60 Senior Mentors to support teaching across the country

Today 60 Senior Mentors concluded their week-long training regarding mentoring practice, pedagogy, and English language assessment. The Senior Mentors, part of the Rwanda Education Board (REB)'s School-based Mentoring Program (SBM Program), will be deployed across the country next week. The training took place in Nyamata, Bugesera and was facilitated by the USAID-funded Literacy, Language, and Learning (L3) Initiative and the International Education Exchange.

The SBM Program will reach P1 to S3 teachers across the country in the effort to improve student learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy. In order to achieve this result, the initiative aims to improve teachers' English language skills and their ability to use proven instructional practices in their subjects.

"When teachers are speaking English well and are confident in their use of new, effective instructional techniques, they'll be better able to support student learning," says Damian Ntanzwa, head of REB's Teacher Development and Management department.

Teachers are receiving continuous professional development support through strong mentorship. Each of the 60 Senior Mentors will train and oversee up to 16 School-based Mentors, already deployed across the country, who work directly with teachers at two schools each. Senior Mentors, some of whom had been previously working as School-based Mentors, will ensure quality mentoring through visiting schools, providing guidance, and conducting professional development meetings for School-based Mentors. In turn, School-based Mentors support—rather than supervise—teachers by modeling effective instructional practice, supporting lesson preparation, observing classes, and holding regular meetings.

At the training, Senior Mentors were oriented on their responsibilities and effective mentorship techniques. They explored active, learner-centered lessons, the appropriate use of English, how to encourage critical thinking, and used bottle caps, paper scraps, and other low-cost, locally available materials to make instructional materials, such as geometrical shapes and alphabet charts.

They were also introduced to the Rwandan English Proficiency Standards (REPS) for teachers, which are the basis for the assessment tools that mentors will use in supporting teachers to improve their English language skills.

"A big part of your job as Senior Mentors is to focus on supporting teachers with the lowest levels of English," L3's Paul Gilbody, who supported REB in developing the standards and tools, told the mentors at the training. "These teachers should be a priority for the next few terms."

The Senior Mentors are eager to move to their districts next week. "It's exciting," Senior Mentor Brian Mugisha said of his new post.

Funded by USAID, the L3 Initiative is implemented by Education Development Center (EDC) in partnership with REB and with assistance from Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO), Concern Worldwide, International Education Exchange, and the Peace Corps.

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